1:Barnes E-5 (1946-1949)1954 FR5 Ngoni FR5
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at a royal homestead, and was led by a nominee of the king, usually a prince or chief. Other royal homesteads, called 'heads', were in charge of princes and were the foci of allegiance of groups of chiefdoms within the kingdom.

Thus every man owed allegiance in several places. He had obligations to his agnatic lineage, and in particular to that segment of the lineage within the chiefdom to which he belonged. Local matters, questions arising over land and cattle, and quarrels between neighbours, were settled by discussion between agnates or by reference to the lieutenant appointed by the chief to look after the district. Every man was also a member of a division of his chiefdom, and hunted wild beasts with his fellows in the division. He was a member of his chiefdom as against other chiefdoms, and looked to his chief for assistance in his affairs, even as the chief relied on the support of his people in his own struggles with other chiefs. In the nation, every man belonged to a regiment, fought and danced alongside his regimental age-mates drawn from every chiefdom, and was expected to support the prince who commanded the regiment. Finally he was a member of a 'head' and within his regiment was grouped together with others from the same head. A man might change his chiefdom, but his allegiance to regiment and head were fixed.[5]

The Ngoni State was founded in the 1820's by men and women, perhaps a thousand in number, who had grown up in a social system of this kind. Certain parts of the system were dropped, others were developed. In effect, the system was simplified and adapted to the life of migrant brigandage which the Ngoni enjoyed for some seventy years. The old alignment of agnatic lineages disappeared, for the great majority of Ngoni joined the system by capture, not by birth. In its place a quasi-agnatic residential system was evolved, in which men and women bore allegiance not to their own agnatic seniors but to their lord or captor. This system was, however, tied in with an arrangement of royal homesteads which in itself was a development of the division of polygynous households into great, left- and right-hand 'houses'. There were no chiefdoms within the nation, for the nation began, as it were, as a *tabula rasa* without significant relics of earlier chiefly alignments. The age-set system remained the basis of military organization, but there were no royal or chiefly commanders appointed over regiments and there were no regimental barracks. Instead the bulk of the population lived in large villages which resembled the former royal homesteads and military barracks but in which men

[5] Based on Bryant, *Olden times*, and Gluckman, 'Kingdom of the Zulu'.

1:Barnes E-5 (1946-1949) 1954 FR5 Ngoni FR5
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Each lord selected some of his quasi-related dependent men and made them his lieutenants. A lieutenant[14] was responsible for carrying out his lord's instructions and helped in keeping the peace within the segment. Thus a dispute between two people in the same segment was referred in the first instance to the lieutenants of their lord, who reported their decision on the matter to him. If agreement could not be reached the matter was referred to the lieutenants of the lord's lord, that is, to the next superior segment, and so on until the matter came before the Paramount Chief. A lord could override the decision of his lieutenants if he wished. The Paramount Chief's lieutenants were responsible for administering the poison ordeal (*muavi*) when accusations of sorcery were made or when there was no other evidence.[15]

In the Nguni lineage, new inferior segments were formed mainly by differentiation between brothers, or between sons of different mothers. These types of differentiation occurred in the residential system and gave rise to new primal segments but alongside other processes of segmentation. The Nguni division of wives into great, right- and left-hand was developed into an arrangement whereby a man with many wives and many followers divided his wives into *bevies*[16] of some half a dozen wives each and allocated his followers to specific bevies. Each leader of a bevy had her junior co-wives, her own and their sons, and her lieutenants and other dependants acquired by capture. Each of these groups of followers under a senior wife constituted a separate segment and we shall refer to the wife in charge of a segment of this kind as the lady (*akosikazi*) of the segment. Sons, lieutenants and even quasi-related dependants who were not lieutenants were all able to found inferior segments of their own within their lady's segment. Thus with the passage of time every flourishing segment became subdivided internally into several inferior segments, and in addition there was often what we shall term a *rump*, consisting of dependants not allocated to any inferior segment.

Most of the Nguni settlements were small, but on their march north the Ngoni lived in large compact villages containing over a thousand huts and several thousand inhabitants. Within these large villages people were arranged in terms of their segmentary affiliation and it is for this reason that we have spoken of a 'residential' system. The members of each small primal segment lived

[14] *Nduna*, pl. *nduna*. cf. Zulu *induna*.

[15] See Wiese, 'Expedição', pp. 470, 472, and 'Geschichte', pp. 188, 190.

[16] In earlier publications I used the term 'band' in place of 'bevy'. See my *Marriage*, p. iii.

1:Barnes E-5 (1946-1949)1954 FR5 Ngoni FR5
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to which some men definitely belonged and others definitely did not. When matters of national importance needed decision, they were discussed at a meeting attended by at least all the lieutenants of the various bevies of the Paramount Chief, and all the spokesmen mentioned in accounts of meetings with Europeans during the later period and who can now be identified belong to this category. It seems possible that the heads of other major segments also took part in these discussions, and that other men listened to them even if they did not take part.

The role played in tribal affairs by brothers and junior sons of the Paramount Chief is not clear. The Paramount Chief did not himself actively intervene in many domestic matters until they were specifically referred to him by his lieutenants, and it seems possible that within their own segments other members of the royal house behaved in the same manner. At least nowadays some aristocratic headmen, not necessarily members of the royal family, behave in this aloof way. The head of the segment, like the head of the village, represents its common interest, its unity, and cannot intervene on his own initiative in the affairs of his people. He lies beyond the reach of their quarrels and disputes, and has to be brought into or informed of them in his judicial capacity by his lieutenants. Wiese says that previously members of the royal house were the real governors and judges in their segments, but that by 1891 in three cases out of four effective power had passed to their lieutenants and that they were merely 'show chiefs'.[22] This observation appears to confirm the thesis that with increased segmentation effective control passed from the head of the primal segment to the heads of the inferior segments within it, leaving the head of the primal segment as ceremonial head; but we do not know what evidence if any Wiese had about earlier conditions. It seems probable that before Wiese's time, as well as during it, the heads of large segments ruled through, as well as with the approval of, their lieutenants. So strongly does this principle still apply to the office of Paramount Chief that when recently a brawl began at a beer party attended by the Chief, he at once ran away, lest in the mêlée he might be forced to take direct action.[23]

Thus we see that in the Ngoni residential system, although segments were enduring social groups and the pattern of relationships once laid down could not be altered in formal terms, yet in fact there was a continual movement in the disposition of political

[22] Wiese, 'Expedição', p. 470.
[23] Gluckman reports similar conditions among the Lozi, where there is a maxim, 'The chief is not a policeman'. See his 'Lozi of North-Western Rhodesia'.

1:Barnes E-5 (1946-1949) 1954 FR5 Ngoni FR5
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man presenting his request for a gun licence, or for permission to go to Southern Rhodesia, or to move to another village, or whatever it may be, is told first to bring a letter from his chief in support of his request and it will then be considered. Thus the approval of the chief is necessary for a variety of enterprises.

A chief may decide not to support a request for a variety of reasons. He does not want to recommend to the Administration projects which will turn out unfavourably, and yet he does not want to oppose unnecessarily the wishes of his people who may begin to drift away into other counties or to Southern Rhodesia if they feel he is being unfair to them. Many of these requests from his people are handled by the court clerk who has custody of the rubber stamps, without whose imprint no letter looks official. Other councillors and advisers may also help with these requests, and may advise the chief, in the light of their own interests and of their estimate of the public interests, on whether or not to support a request. There is thus opportunity for a friend of the chief to block rivals and enemies by seeing that their requests do not go forward. Men who are thwarted in this way can appeal to the Administration, and may perhaps be granted their request. Such action, however, is likely to increase the antagonism of the Native Authority towards them, and in so far as they have defied the authority of the chief by appealing against his decision, they may be censured by their neighbours. Thus what they gain in one respect may be offset by what they lose in another. When the quarrel between a councillor and a man who is, say, trying to open a shop in his village is of long standing and with faults and undisclosed offences on both sides, it may be unwise to risk the whole matter being brought to the notice of the Administration by an appeal over the matter of the shop.

In other situations, where the Administration endeavours to intervene in some matter in which the chief is thought to be dilatory, the Native Authority may shield a man because of the danger of possible repercussions. Thus, for instance, a District Officer on tour found a man living in a village at which he was not registered. He turned the offender over to the Native Court. The offender had a perfectly good defence but his story would have involved reference to incest by an important person and it was therefore undesirable that the District Officer should hear of the matter. Accordingly the Court delayed the hearing of the case on some technicality, and after the District Officer had left the area nothing more was done.

In the main the Administration presents a united front to the Ngoni, and the words and actions of each Administrative officer

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In contrast to this, the private affairs of the chieftainship, matters connected with royal cattle, disputes among the chief's wives and quarrels between the chief and his affines or close supporters are discussed at the chief's village. Quarrels of an apparently trivial nature, such as a chief's wife's running away with a lorry driver, would in the old days have threatened the whole internal structure of the county segment, and they are still treated as questions of State by the lieutenants and kinsmen of the chief who attend these meetings. The contrast between these two kinds of assembly is striking. They are described by different vernacular terms,[24] and while any man can attend and speak at a meeting at the court, it would be considered inappropriate for him to intervene in a meeting at the chief's village unless his position in the old residential system was a high one. Women listen to court meetings, but rarely if ever speak, for the Administration works very largely through men and it is men who discuss the kinds of thing in which the Administration is interested. At the chief's village, the interests of the chief's kinswomen and wives are often directly concerned and they themselves contribute to the discussion. The marriages of chiefs established, and to a lesser extent do still reinforce and establish, affinal ties which cut across the cleavages between segments and which were crucial to the balance of power within the State. A quarrel between a chief and his wife was a matter of political, and not merely domestic, significance and must therefore be discussed by the chief's political advisers.

The sanction of deportation appears to be employed only in connexion with offences against the chieftainship. Thus a lieutenant who embezzled some royal cattle was called before a meeting at his chief's village attended by the important lieutenants in the county, and ordered to leave the country. Similarly, a man who was found drinking with a chief's wife under suspicious circumstances was ordered to leave the country by a tribunal of this kind. He moved first to another county, but was forced to move on again out of Ngoniland. Such actions are sometimes taken without reference to recognized Native Courts or to the Administration, and the effectiveness of the tribunal's decision depends on the support it has from the people as a whole and from the Native Authority organization rather than on the ultimate sanctions wielded by the Administration. However, when matters of this

[24] A meeting to discuss matters of general interest is *msonkhano*; one to discuss affairs of the chieftainship is *lubanzya*. cf. *ku-sonkhana*, to assemble (Nyanja) and *i(li)bandla*, assembly (Zulu). The different derivation of the words, from Nyanja and Zulu, is significant. *Lubanzya* also means age-set.

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review by the Administration, but in practice the cases are so numerous, the written account of them so brief, and often the handwriting of the record so bad, that it is difficult to make an adequate review. The Administration is able to keep some check on the financial transactions of the courts, and convictions for embezzlement are not uncommon; but the Administration does not greatly influence the decisions taken by the courts nor their enforcement. For though there are police on the lorry routes and crocodiles in the rivers, it is fairly easy for a determined man (or woman) who is dissatisfied with the treatment he has received in the courts to get away. He can usually get to a White farm or to a town, and once there it is not so easy to get him back. Men are not continually running away from the courts, for they usually accept decisions given against them, though appeals from a minor chief's court to the Ngoni Appeal Court are fairly common. Few people take their appeals further to the District Officer, and I have never heard of a case going on appeal beyond the Provincial Commissioner's Court.

The general moral approval by the people of the work of the courts which lies behind much of the effectiveness of the Native Court system does not extend automatically to all legal action as such. There is no widely held view that the decisions of the courts must be supported merely because they are the decisions of the courts. Some courts are good, some bad; and some decisions are good, some bad. The great majority of cases that come before a county court are brought by men and women living within the county, but sometimes a litigant begins his suit in a county court not his own, particularly in the Paramount Chief's county court, if he thinks that he will get a better hearing there. Yet chiefs support each other and a case brought before a chief by litigants from another county are sometimes thrown out, in accordance with the Native Courts Ordinance.

There is little moral sanction attaching to legal procedures, or methods of appeal, or even to the particular sums awarded as damages. The members of courts tend in the main to uphold each other's decisions, so that there is a fair amount of conformity throughout the ten counties. All those who work in courts have in fact an interest in increasing the power of the court system, which the people as a whole have not. Disputants will settle out of court if they can, for it is not so far to walk and the whole process is not so disruptive of social ties, but members of a court will sometimes challenge the right of independent arbitrators, village headmen and the like, to come to any binding decisions.

2: Read E-5 (1935-1939) 1956
FR5 Ngoni FR5

361 592 pattern covered two generations including the houses of the former chief and the reigning one.

The houses served several purposes in the organization of village life on the one hand, and on the other, provided an important instrument for regulating succession and inheritance, and for carrying out traditional ceremonies and ritual. It was the eldest son of the second house who would, if the *lusungulu* practice was followed, remain behind with the *gogo* village; and he was responsible for conducting traditional ritual and was expected to be able to carry out ceremonial procedure correctly. This was the main function of the *gogo* village and of the man who was head of the male members of the *gogo* house. The corresponding head of the male members of the big house was the owner of the village, and it was his eldest son by his first wife who would normally succeed him as chief or *mulumuzana*. The members of each house had a stake in the property of that house, particularly in the herd of cattle owned by it, and in any goods, such as cloth, bought by the sale of the cattle of the house. The house united the male members who belonged to it through this common ownership of cattle. In Chapter II of Part IV we shall examine further this aspect of belonging to a house.

554 592 562 In the organization of village life in villages belonging to chiefs or *alumuzana* the houses established the status of the wives of the owner of the village, and the status of those of his mothers who had come with him. His mother in the *indlunkulu* hut ranked first among her co-widows. The big wife came next, and the wife of the second house after her. Wives attached to the big house ranked above those attached to the second house.

571 592 627 562 The houses fulfilled their most prominent role in the day-to-day activities of the households associated with them. It was in these daily affairs and in planning for future events that the house organization provided the chief channels of authority. The exercise of this authority ranged from instruction in household tasks and emphasis on good standards of housekeeping to settling minor disputes arising from marital quarrels over property and over the custody of children. These minor cases could be settled out of court if the senior women showed that they knew how to listen to complaints and give advice which was accepted, with the result that good relations were restored. The main topics of discussion among the senior women on the verandah of the *indlunkulu* were the ingredients of these minor quarrels and disputes. If, by judicious handling, they could keep the cases out of court, they knew, and so did the village, that their authority was enhanced and their prestige more firmly established.

571 592 562 The authority of senior women was further reinforced through their organization of women's labour in household work and in cultivation. This authority in domestic affairs covered a woman's own household and the women and girls attached to it as household servants, the

6:Rattray E, G-5 (ca. 1900) 1907 FR5 Ngoni FR5

606 in-law replied, "And how am I to wound the
539 winds?"

II. When the father-in-law had gone off, the son-in-law took some maize and went off to set some falling-traps, and one of his traps caught a guinea-fowl, and he took it out, and went and gave it to his wife, saying, "There is a guinea-fowl, cook it; I am going away a long way; I shall be away four days, and for my share you must harden some of the gravy over the fire, the meat you can eat yourself." Then the woman went off and told her father, saying, "That fellow has killed a guinea-fowl, and he tells me I must brown the gravy before the fire for him, and the meat I am to eat, and where he has gone he will remain four days." And the father said, "And how can you brown gravy over a fire, my child?"

III. When the son-in-law returned, he told his wife, "Cook some porridge." And the woman did so, and went with it to her husband. But he looked into the dish and said, "Where is my gravy, that I told you to brown before the fire?" Then the woman went off to tell her father, saying, "He is
539 asking for the gravy." Then the father went off
●627 to tell the villagers, "You must settle a case for
606 me." So the people assembled at the village court in crowds, and (one) said, "Chief of the *Kuka* hut, state your case that we may hear." Then the chief of the *Kuka* hut took up his case and began to speak, saying, "As for me, I bid you ask my son-in-law there, on my account, the things which he has in his heart." Then the people spoke, laying the charge before the son-in-law. And he replied, "Yes, what he says is true about me, but I was at the watch-tower, and I saw the chief of the *Kuka* hut, and he asks of me, saying, "You there, do you just sleep on the watch-tower here, and not keep a look-out over the garden? The arrows I went

6:Rattray E,G-5 (ca. 1900) 1907 FR5 Ngoni FR5

and forged that you might just keep them by you, and not keep a look-out for what is eating up the maize in the garden." And as for me, I replied, saying, "And you, how do you wound the winds?" So I also went and caught some "meat," that they in their turn should brown some gravy for me, for, seeing they know how to wound the wind with an arrow, they could also brown gravy before a fire; and that is what the case against me is." And the elders said, "That is his complaint, is it? The chief of the *Kuka* hut was in the wrong."

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XVI

THE TORTOISE AND THE ANTELOPE

I. A Tortoise and an Antelope once had an argument. The Antelope said, "Tortoise, are you able to run along with me?" And the Tortoise replied, "Yes, I am able." Then the Tortoise went off to tell his companions, and he said, "We have had a discussion with the Antelope (about running), and he says we must race together, and you, my friends, come along, you must give me your assistance." And the Tortoise began to place them in a long line, and they reached to the plain which they had agreed upon [as the scene of the race]. Then the Antelope said, "Tortoise, come on, let us begin to run." Then the Antelope set off as hard as he could; he runs and runs, and at length calls out, "Hallo, Tortoise!" And the Tortoise replied far in front, "Hallo! I passed long ago." And the Antelope set off again, and again called out, "Where

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8: Barnes E-5 (1946-1949) 1951 FR5 Ngoni FR5

quarrels in a village the headman is blamed by the chief for not controlling his people well. All disputes are best settled out of court, even if they must be referred to court later on. Therefore a quarrel in village A brings to light all the alliances and cleavages which link A with other villages and differentiate it from them. The headman of A appeals to B for support, invoking the historical incident linking them, and hopes to settle affairs of his village with the authority of B's approval behind him. For if the headman of B is a potential ally he is also a potential rival, and the dissident section in A may themselves invoke their link with B and transfer their allegiance to him. Thus although the details of the relationship between A and B, and the historical incident connected with it, may not be widely known there is considerable external pressure on them to maintain their relationship. Connexions of this kind, mainly between villages, but also between chiefdoms, play a large part in contemporary Ngoni life. Men walk twenty miles to a funeral and women carry pots of beer all day in response to ties of this kind.

Thus we see, on the one hand, that tribal legends are widely known, relate to pre-conquest times, and do not directly influence conduct; and, on the other, that legends associated with inter-group relations are known only by the groups concerned, may relate to either before or after 1898, and do directly influence action. Why is there this difference? We may regard the former legends as of significance mainly in external relations and the latter in internal. Within the tribe, and more particularly within the minor chiefdom, inter-group relations are still largely determined by Ngoni themselves, however much they may have altered in form and content since 1898 and however much Ngoni are part of a wide system. Movement between villages is only slightly controlled by the Administration and in quarrelling, in marriage and adultery, beer-drinking and hoeing, Ngoni men and women choose their own allies and enemies. Incidents in reality give rise to inter-group relations and are subsequently invoked to maintain them. History is written not in books but in the names of groups and in the remembered connexions between them, and as these connexions gradually change so local legendary history is gradually rewritten.

In external relations the Ngoni never act as a tribe except within the framework of European-controlled institutions. As yet no myth of origin is needed to explain the fact that Ngoni and Cewa representatives sit together on the Provincial Council save that the Administration put them there. The world of external relations is one of cultural heterogeneity and comparative adequate documentation. In this field legends have only a limited social function. They differentiate tribe X from tribe Y but do not relate them to each other.

Lastly we must consider Ngoni history proper. There have been many alleged accounts of Ngoni history published in Europe and South Africa, but these seem to have had little influence on the Fort Jameson Ngoni. Recently several histories have appeared in the vernacular, and tribal history

10: Barnes E-5 (1946-1949) 1959
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TABLE 1. *Village Types*

Type of village		*Senior resident*
Royal	Capital	First lieutenant
	Regal	First lieutenant
	Chief's	Chief
Cadet		Royal Headman
Commoner		Commoner Headman

This process of village formation may be illustrated from Mpezeni's own county. The capital of the county is the village founded by Mpezeni I for his chief wife and one or two other wives. His heir Singu was born in this village, and when he married he founded two villages of his own which are now regal villages. In the senior of these two Mpezeni II was born, and in about 1925 he founded a new village which is still the chief's village of the county. There are other regal villages in the county founded in a similar manner. 621

This formation of royal villages would, other things being equal, lead to a dispersal of the population. It seems, however, that the major factor in dispersing the population since 1898 has been the formation of independent commoner villages. Many of these villages have histories that go back to the foundation of the village as an independent unit immediately after 1898, and it seems likely that the unsettled conditions of those days and the burning of villages did much to bring about the breakdown of the old system in which the royal villages were more important than they are today. 161 621

The royal villages are more closely connected with the chieftainships than are the commoner villages, and the chiefs visit in them more frequently than in other villages. A dispute in a royal village is usually settled by a meeting in the village itself attended by the local chief, whereas in the case of an ordinary village dispute the matter would be taken to the chief for him to settle in his own village or court. A chief may be called to a royal village to drink beer. The royal herds of cattle are kept in the royal villages, and the chiefs look to the first lieutenants of their royal villages for the well-being of the royal cattle as well as of the inhabitants of the royal villages. All the cattle in the country are held to belong in one sense to the Paramount Chief himself,[1] but in as far as the cattle held by most people are concerned, there is no more to this statement than in the parallel expression that 628 [627] ● 422 231 643

[1] Cf. Cashead, p. 27.